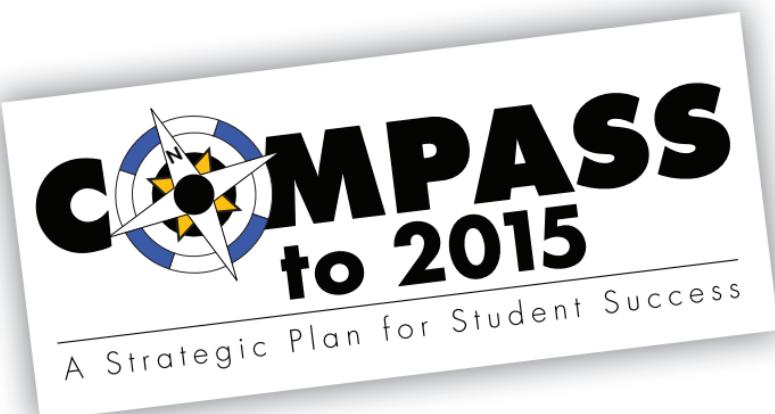




A Balanced Approach to Assessment



VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



A Strategic Plan for Student Success

STRATEGIC GOAL Recognizing that the long range goal of VBCPS is the successful preparation and graduation of every student, the near term goal is that by 2015, 95 percent or more of VBCPS students will graduate having mastered the skills they need to succeed as 21st century learners, workers and citizens.

OUR OUTCOMES FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Our primary focus is on teaching and assessing those skills our students need to thrive as 21st century learners, workers and citizens. All VBCPS students will be:

- Academically proficient;
- Effective communicators and collaborators;
- Globally aware, independent, responsible learners and citizens; and
- Critical and creative thinkers, innovators and problem solvers.

OUR FOCUS ON BALANCED ASSESSMENT

(Strategic Objective 2 in our *Compass to 2015* Strategic Plan)

VBCPS will develop and implement a balanced assessment system that accurately reflects student demonstration and mastery of VBCPS outcomes for student success.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

VBCPS believes that a balanced assessment system employs multiple types of assessments, including, but not limited to, performance tasks, multiple-choice tests, essays and portfolios. The type and purpose of the assessment is determined by the intended use of the data. A balanced assessment system provides qualitative and quantitative data to assist in improving instruction and measures both core subject mastery and 21st century skills.

Standardized Assessments evaluate student performance according to a set of criteria administered across a wide population. These assessments provide quantitative data on the academic proficiency of students when compared with peers across the Commonwealth and/or across the nation.

- **Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessments**

State-mandated tests designed to measure student learning and achievement in grades three-12 in English, mathematics, science and history/social science.

- **ACT**

Measures achievement in English, mathematics, reading and science and assesses college readiness. Institutions of higher education use ACT results for scholarship awards and to determine placement in course work.

- **EXPLORE**

Measures achievement in English, mathematics, reading and science and provides information about educational and career plans for the future.

- **PSAT/NMSQT**

Measures scholastic aptitude in critical reading, mathematics and writing and is used to provide students with practice for the SAT.

- **SAT**

Measures scholastic aptitude in critical reading, mathematics and writing and is used by students in college applications. Institutions of higher education use SAT results for scholarship awards and to determine placement in course work.





Performance Assessments go beyond standardized and multiple-choice tests to measure knowledge, understanding, ability, skill and/or attitudes. These types of assessments can include real-world scenarios that employ critical thinking and problem solving skills and typically consist of exhibitions, investigations, demonstrations, written or oral responses, journals, portfolios and multimedia projects.

- **Integrated Performance Task (IPT)**

Measures critical thinking, problem solving and written communication through a performance task that uses real-life scenarios; administered in grades four and seven.



- **College and Work Readiness Assessment (CWRA)**

Measures the skills of analysis and problem solving, as well as writing effectiveness and writing mechanics through a performance task that uses real-life scenarios; administered in English 11 courses.

The balanced assessment system in VBCPS impacts teaching and learning because teachers and administrators are clear about:

- The role of data obtained from both formative (for learning) and summative (of learning) assessments;
- The means by which student mastery of core subjects and 21st century skills are assessed (quantitatively and qualitatively); and
- The need to focus teaching and learning on rigorous, authentic learning experiences so that minimum competency is the foundation, not the final outcome.

Next Practices are designed to further develop a balanced approach to assessment of students' academic proficiency and of 21st century skills. VBCPS is working to incorporate several components in our assessment toolbox:



- **Program for International Student Assessment (PISA)**

Measures student achievement in scholastic performance in mathematics, science and reading and provides an international comparison of performance.

- **Cornerstone Assessments**

Measure student performance across units in a grade level or course of study related to process skills, key understandings about content and 21st century skills through a performance task that is integrated when appropriate.

- **Digital Portfolios and Multimedia Projects**

Measure student performance across grade levels or within a course of study and provides samples of various assessments. The portfolio encourages student self-assessment and goal setting, and is organized digitally to facilitate sharing and peer review.

- **Industry Credentials**

Measure the level of understanding regarding specific skills and knowledge within a Technical and Career Education program of study as compared to industry standards.

For all things “Compass,” visit vbschools.com

Virginia Beach City Public Schools operates from the foundation of a strategic plan known as *Compass to 2015*, which focuses on one strategic goal and five supporting objectives. This publication is designed to address one of those objectives: Strategic Objective 2/Balanced Assessment. The school division’s website, vbschools.com, is the place to go for more information about how the school division approaches the assessment of student performance. For example, on vbschools.com, you will find answers to frequently asked questions about the CWRA and IPT as well as video overviews. Of course, parents are also encouraged to talk with their children’s teachers and principals about testing, testing preparation and what the school division does with assessment results.

Those who want more information about *Compass to 2015* will find additional resources on vbschools.com, including:

- An overview of the 21st century skills the school division is seeking to foster among students
- Videos that outline the five strategic objectives, how schools are building 21st century skills in students and the philosophy behind *Compass to 2015*
- A printable copy of *Compass to 2015*
- A glossary of terms

vbschools.com

Your virtual link to Hampton Roads’ largest school system.

Virginia Beach City Public Schools

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Virginia Beach City Public Schools does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. School Board policies and regulations (including, but not limited to, Policies 2-33, 4-4, 4-43, 5-7, 5-33, 5-44, 6-7, 7-11, 7-48, 7-49 and Regulations 5-44.1, 7-11.1, 7-57.1) provide equal access to courses, programs, counseling services, physical education and athletic, vocational education, instructional materials, and extracurricular activities.

To seek resolution of grievances resulting from alleged discrimination or to report violations of these policies, please contact the Title IX Coordinator/Director of Student Activities at (757) 263-2020, 1413 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451 (for student complaints) or the Section 504/ADA Coordinator/Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources at (757) 263-1133, 2512 George Mason Drive, Municipal Center, Building 6, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456 (for employees or other citizens). Concerns about the application of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act should be addressed to the Section 504 Coordinator/Director of Guidance Services and Student Records at (757) 263-1980, 2512 George Mason Drive, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456 or the Section 504 Coordinator at the student’s school.

Alternative formats of this publication which may include taped, Braille, or large print materials are available upon request for individuals with disabilities. Call or write Susan Keipe, Virginia Beach City Public Schools, 2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038, Virginia Beach, VA 23456-0038. Telephone 263-1030 (voice); fax 263-1131; 263-1240 (TDD) or email her at susan.keipe@vbschools.com.



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